



Roane County Community Unites To Move Out Of Floodplain

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Roane County, West Virginia

Reedy, WV - One person described the sounds of a thunderstorm at night as nothing short of “horrifying” to the regularly flood-stricken residents of Reedy, a small community nestled in northern Roane County.

Today, many Reedy residents return to sleep instead of holding vigil on fast rising waters thanks to a federal, state and locally supported program that helped move families out the floodplain and out of harm's way.



“I can’t even tell you how many times those people in Reedy got flooded, but I can tell you it was getting worse every time,” said Melissa Bise, director of the Roane County Emergency Services.

After years of repetitive flooding, Roane, in 2000 was among six West Virginia counties that qualified to become part of a Federal Emergency Management Agency \$3.3 million project funded by the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and the U.S. Department of Urban Development.

In this once bustling town that served as the county’s main business district, businesses were sold, failed, or abandoned as flooding had become a way of life for those on Main Street and streets behind, a stone’s throw from the right fork of Reedy Creek.

“Believe it or not, the hardest part of getting this project started was convincing people that this would be good for them,” Bise said.

Officials said that although most of the repetitively flooded residents were at first reluctant to leave their homes, the desperate situation many found themselves in with nearly uninhabitable homes made the choice to move an easy one.

Connie Wilson is glad that she and her aging parents moved out, but it took some convincing. “No one wanted to leave. We are a community and we didn’t want to give that up. Wilson said she and her parents did not opt-in to the acquisition opportunity the first time, but when the next flood hit, Wilson quickly changed her mind.

“I knew it was the right thing to do. I’d look out and think it’s so pretty, but it’s not pretty when it’s a river in your backyard,” Wilson said. Both she and her parents subsidized the money they received to build new homes just blocks from where they had lived.

Wilson said she suffered respiratory problems, but never made the connection between the flood damage just below her first floor. “After each flood time I had the duct worked cleaned... but it’s funny, now that I’ve moved I’m no longer coughing,” she added.

Last year, with federal, state and local agencies working together, 35 families and structures including two churches in Reedy moved out of harm's way in one of the largest flood mitigation projects in the State of West Virginia. More than \$1.3 million was allocated to the project.

All of the residents relocated in Roane County with the exception of one family who moved to neighboring Jackson County.

Robert Nichols and wife, Linda, also opted into the acquisition program. “The process wasn’t without it’s problems, but am I glad we did it? I’m tickled,” he said. “It was the best thing that could have happened to us.”

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region III**

State: **West Virginia**

County: **Roane County**

City/Community: **Reedy**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Private**

Hazard Type: **Severe Storm; Flooding; Hurricane/Tropical Storm**

Activity/Project Type: **Flood-proofing; Flood Control; Relocation**

Activity/Project Start Date: **01/2000**

Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**

Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Unknown**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Unknown**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: **<http://www.floodsmart.gov/>**

Reference URL 2: **<http://www.wvdhsem.gov/>**

Main Points

- In 2000, after years of repetitive flooding, Roane was among six West Virginia counties that qualified to become part of a \$3.3 million project funded by FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and the U.S. Department of Urban Development.
- Officials said that although most of the repetitively flooded residents were at first reluctant to leave their homes, the desperate situation many found themselves in with nearly uninhabitable homes made the choice to move an easy one.
- With Federal, state and local agencies working together, 35 families and structures including two churches in Reedy moved out of harm's way in one of the largest flood mitigation projects in the State of West Virginia. More than \$1.3 million was allocated to the project.



Repetitive flooding led to residents moving out of floodplain



New, improved ... and dry houses in Roane